

**Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs Minutes
Friday, 07 June 2019
Rancher's Roost, Westcliffe Bowling Alley
25 Main Street
Westcliffe, CO 81252**

Members and Guests

Members Present:

Duane Dailey, Chair
Jack Rudder, Vice Chair
Hollie Caldwell, Secretary
Patricia Hammon, Member
Norm Steen, Member
Sheila Scanlon, Member
Longinos Gonzalez Jr., Member

DMVA Staff Present:

Mickey Hunt, DMVA Deputy Executive Director
Joanne Iglesias, CDVA West Director
Myra Dollar, CDVA East Office Manager
Gail Hoagland, CDVA Grant Administrator
Carissa Snyder, CDVA East Program Assistant

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Guests Present:

Dave Akin, veteran
Jennifer Constantine, spouse
Bud Danley, veteran
Nancy Featherstone, advocate
Betty Forand, veteran
Aaron Jones, veteran
Randy Knight, VFW Post 12063
Dan Lindvig, veteran
Kathy Lindvig, veteran
Linda Marble, veteran
Ric Parrent, veteran
Dave Piece, VFW Post 12063
James Phelps, VFW Post 12063
Theresa Rudder, President, General Federation of Women's Clubs of Colorado
Michelle Ruehl, veteran
Jim Silver, veteran
Charles Vogel veteran
John Watson, veteran
Paul Watson, veteran
Chuck Williams, veteran

Opening

Mr. Dailey called the meeting to order at 0900 hours. Proceedings began with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for POWs, MIAs, and troops overseas. Mr. Dailey invited introductions from Board members, staff, and guests.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Hammon corrected her comments as reported in the April 2019 minutes, specifically that American Legion Post 50 will hold its annual tea at the Western Region One Source during the summer, and that the contribution from the Vail Health Foundation is to support behavioral health. Mr. Rudder moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The motion carried.

Board Member Comments

Ms. Scanlon said that the governor has signed the legislation for the Woman Veteran license plate. The UVC meeting on 13 June will focus on the issue of veteran suicide. The UVC Women Task Force continues its efforts to establish a State Women Veterans Coordinator with the collaboration of DMVA.

Ms. Hammon said that new county veterans service officers have been hired in Garfield and Routt counties. She is covering Pitkin County until a new service officer is hired there. She attended the DMVA visit to CLCs in May. A women's American Legion post is being organized in Grand Junction; one currently exists in Littleton.

Dr. Caldwell said that Centura Health has now been using the Columbia protocol for three months and is tracking its efficacy. Intake is being modified to identify veterans at initial contact. She recently visited Willamette National Cemetery in Oregon.

Mr. Steen said he will participate in a meeting with the Colorado Department of Transportation concerning the effort to assist veterans in accessing transportation to medical services. He spoke at the Armed Forces Day event in Colorado Springs on May 18. He continues work in conjunction with the director the Lindstrom clinic as VHA prepares for the June enactment of the Mission Act. Earlier in the week he attended the annual CCI conference, also attended by Mr. Hunt and Mr. Callahan.

Mr. Gonzalez said he attended the inaugural Memorial Day ceremony at the Pikes Peak National Cemetery. He gave an address at Boys State on 06 June. On June 21 he will attend the Fort Carson change of command ceremony. He was in attendance at the Air Force Academy graduation and was one of the group to greet President Trump upon his arrival at the event.

Mr. Rudder said that a large concern in southern Colorado continues to be veteran suicide, which is double the national average in Colorado and in the San Luis Valley specifically the rate doubles again. Robby Robinson was the speaker at the Rio Grande Memorial Day ceremony. He attended the ribbon cutting for the Western Region One Stop on 09 May. There will be a community meeting in Alamosa on June 25 to discuss the Mission Act.

Mr. Dailey said that the April town halls in Frisco and Kremmling were well attended, although VA was not present at the Frisco event. He attended the annual Memorial Day ceremony on Hoosier Pass held the Sunday prior to the holiday.

Public Comment

Dr. Phelps said that Custer County has a very low suicide rate, including among veterans, though it does have the highest number of veterans per capita in Colorado. There is a county clinic available for health care that is staffed with nurse practitioners and circulating doctors, and physical therapy services are available locally. He said that the 1993 assessment of the needs of Colorado veterans did not include Custer County.

Mr. Parrent said that the Choice program has been difficult for area veterans. The routes and mileage used by the program were often impracticable and incorrect. The travel office at the Denver VAMC was of help in resolving some of the complication, but that involvement made the process take longer.

Mr. Knight said one problem he has observed is that veterans receive incorrect information from VSOs. He asked who oversees the county veterans service officers in Colorado. Mr. Dailey explained the structure of the Division, identified the two directors, and said that annual training this year will be held in August.

Community Presentation

Dr. Phelps is the administrator of the Veterans Trust Fund Grant in Westcliffe. Their assistance program is available to veterans, surviving spouse, and dependent children. He said that approximately 10 percent of the veterans in the area live at less than 50 percent of the poverty level. The greatest needs in the area are food and fuel, specifically firewood and propane. They do refer veterans to LEAP, but in many cases the veterans are just over the income limit or they are renters. There is one grocery store in the county and this can make the use of gift cards for groceries difficult. The program works in conjunction with the VSO. They had a complication with the grant rules this year when a veteran needed a new furnace, and grant funds could not be used due to the disallowance of capital improvements. Their other difficulty was the delayed payments. Mr. Dailey said that problem has been resolved. Several veterans expressed their appreciation for assistance received through the VTF.

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The board here recessed at 10:30 a.m. and resumed at 10:50 a.m.

Reports

Mr. Hunt said the legislature's capital development committee will visit the Veterans Memorial Cemetery and the WROS the week of June 09. The week of July 04 they will visit the Glenwood Springs resource center.

Ms. Iglesias said the WEOS grand opening went well. National Doughnut Day, which was the day of this meeting, was attracting media and veterans as the WROS had doughnuts available. The annual women veterans' tea will be held in August. The Vietnam Veteran Memorial traveling wall be in Delta through June 09. DVA West has hired a state veteran service officer, who is training at DVA East this week.

On behalf of Mr. Robinson, Mr. Dailey said that the new light has been installed on the Veterans Trust Monument and shared the photo with the group.

Ms. Hoagland thanked Dr. Phelps for his time and effort spent administering the VTF grant. Dr. Phelps thanked the Board for the increased grant award for next year.

Discussion/Action Items

Ms. Scanlon said that UVC and the American Legion are involved in efforts to make more funds available for the surviving spouses of veterans, and inquired whether the Board would like to take a position. Ms. Hammon said the Board could send a letter to the governor through DMVA expressing support and requesting federal lobbying. Ms. Scanlon so moved, Ms. Hammon seconded. Ms. Scanlon and Ms. Hammon will draft the letter.

Election of Officers

Chair: Ms. Hammon nominated Jack Rudder for the office of Chair. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Mr. Rudder was unanimously elected and he accepted.

Vice Chair: Ms. Scanlon nominated Pat Hammon for the office of Vice Chair. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Mr. Dailey nominated Norm Steen for the office. Mr. Gonzalez seconded. The vote went to written ballot. Seven members voted for a majority of four. Tellers were Ms. Hoagland and Ms. Snyder. The majority was won by Ms. Hammon. She accepted.

Secretary: Ms. Hammon nominated Sheila Scanlon for the office of Secretary. Dr. Caldwell seconded. Ms. Scanlon was unanimously elected and she accepted.

Upcoming Meetings

The Board set the following locations for the meetings for the upcoming year:

August 02	Grand Junction, WROS (visits to VMC and VAMC)
September 06	Boulder
October 04	Florence, SVCLC
November 06	Aurora, Wings Over the Rockies
December 06	Littleton
January 03	Lakewood, Denver VARO
February 07	Colorado Springs, Mount Carmel (Mr. Steen and Mr. Gonzalez to facilitate)
March 06	Burlington
April 03	Aurora, Chamber of Commerce
May 01	Cortez
June 05	Steamboat Springs (Ms. Hammon to facilitate)

Adjournment

There being no further business, Dr. Caldwell moved to adjourn. Ms. Scanlon seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.